



Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

General Dog Care



Before you bring your dog home

You will need food, a food dish, water bowl, interactive toys, brush, comb, collar, leash, and a dog crate.

Feeding

An adult dog should be fed one large or two smaller meals of high quality dog food each day. Puppies from 6 to 12 weeks need to be fed small meals 4 times a day. Puppies from 3 to 6 months need to be fed 3 times a day. Consider following a feeding routine by feeding your dog the same time every day. Provide fresh, clean water at all times. Wash and refill water bowls daily.

Grooming

Dogs should be bathed when dirty; at least two to three times a year. Certain breeds of dogs need regular haircuts. Frequent brushing helps keep your dog's coat clean, and reduces the amount of shedding.

Handling

To pick up your dog, place one hand behind the front legs and another under the hindquarters. Lift gently. Never pick up a dog by the scruff of the neck (behind the ears) or by the front legs without supporting the rear end.

Housing

Dogs should have a clean, dry place of their own in the house. Consider providing your dog a dog crate. Dogs are natural dening animals and they consider

crates a private place where they feel safe. Crates are also wonderful as training tools. Please keep your dog indoors when you are not at home. Dogs are social animals and need the company of others to be happy.

Training/Behavior Modification

When you first bring a new dog home you are building a new relationship. A training program will help you and your dog learn how to communicate effectively with one another. It will also help you teach your dog how to be a good citizen in your home. Consider joining a dog training class and reading animal behavior books. All training should involve positive reinforcement techniques.

Identification

All dogs are required to have a current dog license. Your dog should always have a collar with his dog license around his neck. Also consider an ID tag with your dog's information, a microchip, or a tattoo to ensure your dog is returned to you if he becomes lost.

Housebreaking

Any dog can be housebroken with time and consistency. All dogs need to be on a regular "outside" schedule. Use positive reinforcement to praise your dog when he goes outside. Only correct your dog if you catch him in the act. Never hit or scream at your dog if he goes in the house. This only teaches him to be afraid of you. Use a dog crate to assist with your housebreaking program.

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs, contact
(602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov

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Exercise

Depending on the breed or age of dog, dogs need regular exercise. A walk around the block is not enough. Spend at least one to two hours a day exercising your dog. Run, play fetch, whatever it takes, exercise is the key to your dog's physical and mental health.

Play

Dogs love to play with toys, other dogs and humans. Provide your dog with interactive toys and lots of opportunities to play. Do not play rough games like tug of war with your dog. This teaches your dog dominance and aggression.

Health

Your dog should see a veterinarian at least once a year for an examination and annual shots, and immediately if she is sick or injured.

Fleas and Ticks

Fleas are a problem that should be taken very seriously. These tiny parasites feed off of your pet, transmit tapeworms and irritate the skin. Carefully check your dog once a week for fleas or ticks. If there are fleas on your dog, there will be fleas in your house. You may need to use flea bombs or premise control sprays and treat all animals in your house. Make sure that any sprays, powders or shampoos you use are safe for all dogs and that all products are compatible if used together.

Spay / Neutering

Females should be spayed before they become sexually mature (between 4-6 months). Neutering a male (removing the testicles) can prevent marking, decrease the urge to escape outside to look for a mate and reduce fighting between males. Spaying a female (removing the ovaries and uterus) helps prevent breast cancer, which can be fatal 90

percent of the time, and pyometra (uterus infections), a very serious problem in older females that must be treated with surgery and intensive medical care. It also prevents unwanted animals from being born.

Vaccinations

Vaccines protect animals and people from specific viral and bacterial infections. They are not a treatment. If your dog gets sick because he is not properly vaccinated, the vaccinations should be given after your pet recovers.

Cats should be vaccinated with a combination vaccine at 2, 3, and 4 months of age and then annually.

Maricopa County law requires all dogs older than 3 months of age to be vaccinated for rabies. The first rabies vaccine must be followed by a vaccination a year later and then every three years.